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History of the Library of Miami University.

BY WM. J. MCSURELY, Librarian.

The records of the Board of Trustees show that in 1811 and 1812, "the Rev. John W. Browne, a missionary in Ohio and elsewhere," made collections of monies and books for the University. On April 17th, 1812, the treasurer was authorized to call on Samuel J. Brown and "secure the books which had been forwarded to him for use in the University." Those months of the dawning of the War of 1812 could not have been a very promising time for securing gifts in this northwest, but pioneer ministers were men of faith and courage. It is interesting to know that this Home Missionary, as he went here and there, asked gifts for the new college, soon to be opened. Certainly it was expected that this new college would help to train men for the ministry, and would greatly help the church, and it surely did. The Rev. Browne died in 1812 or 1813, for in November of this latter year a committee was appointed to confer with the administrator of his estate. But the matter was not fully settled until July 6, 1824, shortly before the University opened. Among the receipts of the University at this time was a subscription of books to be yet supplied.

April 12, 1821, the Board, in making plans for the opening of the University, speaks of "plans to provide a suitable building, a library, and apparatus." The gift of John Harvard's library made sure the founding of Harvard Uni-

versity. Our fathers who established Miami University looked upon a library as essential in the very beginning.

It seems that "The Circulating Library Society of Cincinnati" was in debt to the Miami University. For, in April, 1824, the President of its Board of Directors addressed a letter to the Trustees of the University, proposing to pay its debt with books. On July 6, the Board agreed to this proposal and thus became the possessor of 64 numbers of Rees' Encyclopedia at a cost of \$120, and agreed to become responsible for the remaining numbers as they were issued. These were estimated to cost about \$100. We have this Encyclopedia yet, and it cost us a good price, about \$220. But Encyclopedia makers were not very plentiful in those days. It is probable that we have some books that were collected by the Rev. Mr. Browne, 96 or 97 years ago. We certainly have owned this Encyclopedia 87 years.

At a meeting of the Board held November 5, 1824, at which time the University was opened, it was resolved "That the meetings of this Board shall hereafter be holden in the Library Chamber," and this rule is observed to this day. This "Library Chamber" is the library room of to-day, save that for a time there was a recitation room taken off the west end. But in 1853 the partition was removed, and ever since the library room has been the entire north half of the main building, second floor. We would not say one word to the discredit of the old "Library Chamber." It has brought us large enjoyment and gain. Its walls hold many secrets of the Board. But we are glad to believe that we now see on the horizon the promise of a new building. We will tenderly remember the old room, while we gladly hail the new edifice.

At this meeting it was also ordered by the Board "That the Professor of Languages take charge of the Library, and that he shall permit no books to be taken out of the library except for the use of the Faculty." Mr. William Sparrow had been chosen to this chair, and of course was the first librarian. But in a brief time he left to enter upon a professorship in Kenyon College, and on March 24, 1826, Dr. Wm. H. McGuffey was elected Professor of Languages and became

librarian. In some of the old catalogs he is designated as Professor of Languages and Librarian.

On March 31, 1828, the following action was taken by the Board:—(This was the first set of rules adopted for the management of the Library.)

1. No student shall receive from the library more than two volumes at once; nor keep them longer than two weeks.

2. The library shall be opened for receiving and distributing books every Saturday in term time between the hours of 2 and 5 p. m.

(The above was changed. I recall that in 1853, and thereafter, the library was opened on Saturday forenoons only, from about 9 o'clock to 11).

3. Whoever shall keep a book from the library longer than two weeks, or shall injure a book, or permit it to be injured whilst in his possession, shall be fined 6 1-4 cents each week he detains the book from the library, and pay the amount of damage in case of injury.

(The "6 1-4 cents," or Spanish fippenny bit, was a relic of Colonial times. The days of the nickel had not then dawned.)

4. The senior class only shall be allowed to take books from the library.

(This was changed the next year, and students of the college classes were allowed the use of the library, upon payment of a library fee of 50 cents per session.

5. The Professor of Languages shall discharge the duties of Librarian.

The first appropriation for the Library was made September 28, 1825. The University had been opened one year and upon the recommendation of President Bishop it was resolved "That there shall be appropriated annually the sum of \$50 to be expended in subscriptions for periodical, literary and scientific publications, and the further sum of \$200, for the purchase of works of history and science, at the discretion of the President, which sums shall be annually paid upon his order without further appropriation." This order stood until 1834, when the annual appropriation was fixed at \$50. The library fee was stricken out, and the use of the library restricted to the faculty and the seniors.

In 1833, "A Catalogue of the Books Contained in the Library of Miami Universtiy" was issued. It was printed here in Oxford, and published by W. W. Bishop. There are a few copies yet extant. The books are "arranged according to subjects," and their classification is not exactly according to Dewey. The list is an interesting one, and the number of volumes in some classes is as follows:—Biography, 37 volumes; Greek and Latin Classics, 180 volumes. (A number of preachers must have unloaded their bookshelves.) Civil and Ecclesiastical History, 112 volumes. (Not a single history of the United States; Robertson's America is here and Ramsey's America.)

Medicine, Chemistry and Natural History are grouped in one classification, and credited with 26 volumes. This was the beginning of literature in our present departments of Chemistry, Biology and Nature Study.

Another classification makes a jumble of Natural, Mental and Moral Philosophy. Think of dumping Dr. Culler and Dr. Powell into the same nest. Under this heading we have 42 volumes and most of these are on the mental and moral line, as might be expected, since the strong, clear headed Scotch President had charge of this course.

The Periodical list is almost wholly scientific and does not contain a single journal that we take today. We have an almost complete set of the North American Review, whose publication was begun in 1815, but evidently it had not been subscribed for when this catalogue was published.

The list of poetry is a curiosity. Here it is:—Burns' Poems, La Henriade, two volumes, Ossian's Poems, two volumes, Paradise Lost, Crabbe's Borough, Hudibras, two volumes, Milton's Poems. Ten volumes in all and not an American poet in the list.

They were rich in Theology, 157 volumes, and many of these were great folio books, weighty in every way. We have the Biblia Sacra Polyglotta in six folio volumes, which is a beauty and a wonder in its mechanical execution, printed in London in 1657. We have a folio volume by John Calvin concerning the twelve minor prophets, published in Geneva in 1559, more than half a century before the Colonists came to Jamestown. On its title page is a large anchor, with a

serpent twined about its stem. If any one wishes to read this book, he must first master the Latin language. We have quite a number of books rare and curious and valuable. If these were collected by the Rev. John W. Browne, the old missionary should be gratefully remembered today. And the old ministers who gave us such books were not throwing out rubbish to us, in our infancy and need. They gave us something worth while. When we set up our new library building, I bespeak for these and other rare and valuable books, a room where they can lie on shelves, covered with glass doors, where they may be seen and yet not often handled.

In its collection of Philology the library was rich for that day. It had 179 volumes in Latin and Greek and Hebrew and French and German and Spanish and Portuguese. The language business meant work. Hebrew was then a part of the University course for such as expected to enter the ministry, and the library had a large collection of Hebrew books.

What do our readers think of this collection under the classification of Fiction, Wit and Humor? Shakespeare's Works, ten volumes, *Les Aventures de Gil Blas* par Le Sage, four volumes; *The Spy*, 2 volumes, (this looks home like.) *Don Quixote*, (in Spanish,) six volumes, (It isn't yet worn out;) *Novelle Italiene*, *Voyage to the Moon*, *Merry Tales of the Three Wise Men of Gotham*. I don't think the "*Voyage to the Moon*" can be found. Some one must have taken it as a guide book.

The whole number of books in the Library at this time—the ninth year after the opening of the University—was 1296 volumes.

After the resignation of Dr. McGuffey, the Rev. John McArthur, Professor of Greek, was librarian for a time, and he was succeeded by the Rev. Dr. James C. Moffat, Professor of Latin.

In 1841, it was ordered that the diploma fees be used for the increase of the library, and in 1843 the librarian was directed to make an annual report to the Board. In 1844, Dr. Moffat, as librarian, reported 2057 volumes in the library,

only 61 volumes more than had been reported eleven years before. He also reported 244 volumes as missing.

In 1848, the librarian was obliged to report that his orders for books exceeded his appropriation, and the Board appropriated \$100 to pay this balance, and also added \$95 to the annual appropriation for the coming year. And in 1851, it was ordered that the appropriation "for the increase of the library be henceforth limited to \$100 per annum, in addition to diploma fees." The appropriation went on in this small way until the University was closed in 1873. In 1865, a library fee of 50 cents per term was charged against every student, and in 1867 the appropriation was limited to the library fees.

In 1853, the library room was enlarged as has been already told and the two literary societies gave up their separate library rooms and placed their books in the University library and under the care of the librarian. This added about 3000 volumes. But the arrangement was not satisfactory, and in 1855 the Miami Union Society asked and secured the return of their books. In 1856 the Erodelphian Society presented a memorial to the Board of Trustees setting forth that they had placed in the library of the University 1551 volumes by actual count, and in three years 264 volumes were lost or stolen. This memorial was written by Whitelaw Reid and is one of his earliest "State Papers." He was then in training for the courts of Paris and London, and his 'prentice work was well done. The next year the Erodelphians removed their books to cases provided for them in their own hall.

In June, 1845, the Board's standing committee had this to say: "The Committee is of the opinion that the University library, as a whole, has too large a proportion of books upon the abstruse sciences, in strange tongues, and of a technical or a professional character, when compared with its selections of history, poetry and general literature, and that too large a proportion of the purchases made in the last five or six years are of the former class. Collectors of books should more consider the wants and tastes of the readers of the library, than their own more cultivated and dainty tastes for rare and costly books, which few persons can, or will

read." Then in a kind and sympathetic way (there were two preachers on the committee,) they admonish dear Dr. Elliott, the Librarian, to change the character of his purchases. The Board adopted this report, and the next year Dr. Elliott was commended for his compliance with the Board's wishes.

In those years the appropriations were placed at the disposal of the librarian, and he was authorized to expend the money and submit his vouchers when making his annual report.

After Dr. Moffat's departure, Dr. Elliott, the Professor of Greek, was appointed librarian, and his reports are very characteristic. He was one of the most polite and innocent of men, without taste or aptitude for the business management of the library. He begs pardon for the "informalities" in his report. He speaks of "neglecting to take receipts," and at one time he speaks of an expenditure for which he has no vouchers and says the Board "will have to take his word for it." The dear old Professor; may God forgive us thoughtless boys for ever taking advantage of his guilelessness.

The good doctor spent one year across the sea, and during his absence Dr. McFarland acted as librarian. His report is also characteristic, for he saw some things that ought to be mended. He *counted the books*. He found about 5218 volumes and that there were 419 volumes missing. He suggested that too many people had access to the shelves. The Board directed that only the librarian be allowed to handle the books, and so the vigilant doctor, with a good measure of success, enforced this order. After Dr. Elliott's resignation, Professor Swing had charge of the library, and he was somewhat like Dr. Elliott, without taste for its business detail. The following is taken from his report for the year 1865: "That the Board may be informed as to the details of expenditure, I submit the librarian's book, and should it be desirable, in the judgment of your body, that the truthfulness of this record be determined, the result can be reached by comparing the accounts of the librarian's book with the books of the Robert Clarke Co., Cincinnati. As the purchases of books are all made, with rare exceptions, at that

house, it seems unnecessary for me to place book bills before you." Now, this would have seemed curt or pert in most men, but no one who knew Professor Swing would think this of him. Modest and retiring and delightful as he was, his frank report was just a part of himself.

After the departure of Professor Irving, Professor McFarland was appointed librarian. This was in 1866, and he had charge of the library until the University closed in 1873. Again the Professor *counted the books* and found 262 more volumes missing, and again the Board ordered that the Librarian have sole charge of the books, and also the key of the room. The venerable Dr. McFarland is still an honored resident of Oxford and occasionally visits the library to handle some books that are to him as old friends. Some of us will never forget how earnestly and unselfishly during the Civil War he shared the trials and dangers of camp life and military service with the boys under his care. May God bless him and lead him gently down to the setting of his sun and keep him in perfect peace forevermore.

At the re-opening of the University in 1885 an appropriation of \$500 was granted to the library to be expended under the direction of the President, Dr. McFarland. A reading room was arranged for and a few periodicals ordered. For three years Dr. McFarland had charge of the library. He reported 7230 volumes.

In 1886 the state appropriation for the library was \$1000, and in '87, '88 and '89, \$300 per annum. In 1888 the Board added \$350 to the state appropriation. In 1890 the state gave \$800 and the Board \$200, the one-half to be divided among the ten departments, being \$50 to each Professor. This appropriation of \$1000 per annum has been continued until now. In 1902, when the Normal College was opened, the state appropriated \$500 per annum to be used by the Normal College, so that our library fund for the last five years has stood at \$1500 per year.

In 1888, Prof. William A. Merrill was appointed librarian. At Amherst College he had been conversant with the Dewey system of classification, and with the assistance of some of the professors, he classified all the books in the main library, according to this system. He reported 9266 volumes.

In his reports he complained of the congested condition of the library room and also of disorder and abuse of the room and of the books by some of the students. The congestion was relieved by the removal of the government publications to another room, and the experiment of student help was tried. In 1891 this was reported to be unsatisfactory. As the number of students increased the necessity for a librarian was reported as very pressing. In 1892 the Board gave authority to impose fines upon any who failed to return their books. In 1893 Professor O. B. Finch was appointed librarian in connection with his class room work. The library was opened two hours per day, for each week day. Later it was kept open four hours per day.

We are under great obligation to Professor Merrill for his service, gratuitously rendered, in classifying and cataloguing the library. It was a great work, intelligently and completely done. Our catalogue card case is a great convenience, and to one who understands its story it readily guides the seeker to where any particular book may be found.

In January, 1900, the present librarian took charge of the library. But it was soon apparent that with the increased use now made of the library in college work, more help was necessary, and in 1903 Miss Ella G. McSurely, who had taken the library course at Pratt Institute, was made Assistant Librarian.

The library is now open both forenoons and afternoons, and on four evenings of each week. The library room is a very busy place where you may find students and teachers diligently employed. Today shows a great change from the time when the library was open only for an hour or two on Saturdays. The library is now an intelligence department in college work, a place where the student finds many things he needs to know, and also learns how to find them.

Our accession catalogue now calls for about 24,500 volumes. When we enter our new building we should take account of stock and we probably will do so. We lose a few books by deliberate theft, we lose more through thoughtlessness.

RARE BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY.

Most of the arts and sciences look back with mirth, reverent though it may be, yet with real mirth at the early efforts along their various lines. Indeed chemistry is avowedly ashamed of her direct descent from medieval alchemy; while physicians would gladly silence the ubiquitous whispers regarding the shady origin of their profession. Alone among this assembly may modern typography look back to forbears worthy not only of respect, but of positive admiration; early printing, of as early a period as has left a specimen extant, produced work worthy of the best modern presses. Among the most beautiful of printed pages, perhaps, are those which appeared within a hundred years after the invention of printing.

The Miami University Library is so fortunate as to possess an old volume from this early period, printed in Strasburg by Martin Flach, in 1491. This was only forty years after printing from movable types had been invented by Gutenberg in Mainz, before which time all books had been laboriously written by hand in monasteries or by professional scribes. To the people a book had always meant a written document; so that these early printers in order to sell their products, made them as much like manuscripts as possible, even referring to their new work as "artificial writing." Some said it was a profanation; the scribes scoffed at the art and sought to have the "humbug" repressed by the state.

The book we have is called *Aurelii Agustini opuscula plurima*, Aurelius Augustinus being the Latin name for Saint Augustine. There is no title page proper; the title is simply printed in ordinary type on the first page. The information usually given here, however, is found in a colo-

phon or inscription at the end of the book, and gives the place of impression as Argentina, Latin for Strasburg. Every initial letter in the book is dashed with red, while all the larger initials were done in by hand in red pigment, that the volume might as closely approximate a manuscript as was possible. Included in the same covers is a lesser book purporting to be a history of the world. It is called *Fasciculus Temporum* and contains many early and very crude wood cuts. The volume is bound in boards, real wooden boards covered with pig skin, and perforated with worm holes, the ravages of the numerous book worms that have made holes in the paper in the book. The tracks of the human book-worm are evident too, in numberless references and annotations on the page margins.

The old Latin volume of Calvin's writings which Dr. McSurely mentions in his article is indeed most interesting. It was printed by Johann Crispin at Geneva, in 1559, and in as much as Calvin was living there at that time, it is highly probable that he himself oversaw the production of this work. The "Epistola," or preface, is printed in an exquisite font of italic type, which was used only for such prefaces and notes. An interesting circumstance of the origin of this type is that the first font of it was cut in imitation of Petrarch, the poet's handwriting. Today the Germans call it *Cursiv*, while our own name, *Italic*, comes from its having been first used in Venice.

Another very interesting Calvin book is one which bears on its title page this inscription: *Sermons of Maister John Calvin, upon the Books of IOB Londini Impensis Georgij Bishop*. The volume is noteworthy as exhibiting the interchanging of u and v, and for its being the oldest book we have in the English language; it was printed in 1584.

Of interest second only to that of the Strasburg volume is our copy of Plantin's wonderful Bible, published at Antwerp in 1571. It consists of the Greek and Hebrew versions with interlinear translation into Latin. The Greek starts in at the "front" cover, the Hebrew at the other, both working towards the center of the book, where they meet.

This curious arrangement was necessitated by the nature of Hebrew printing which runs from right to left; the pag-

ination of the book follows the same scheme as the two versions, beginning at each cover with 1. The book is of great historical interest and is described at length in the Encyclopedia Britannica under *Plantin*.

Two volumes of the plays of Plantus, one of Latin poetry, and an old Greek Bible in richly embossed pigskin finish the catalogue of the books we have which were printed before 1600. In the books of poetry, italic type is used for the text, and the notes are done in Roman type. The Bible, printed in 1545, is not divided into paragraphs and verses and is the oldest book in the library with numbered pages.

We are in fortunate possession of two examples of the work done by the Elzevirs, famous seventeenth century printers in Europe. These are both in Latin, one being none other than our old companion, Caesar's Commentaries. The *Biblia Sacra Polyglotta* of which Dr. McSurely has spoken is from the London press of Thomas Roycroft, and exhibits wonderful early fonts of foreign types; it gives the versions of the Bible in seven different tongues.

The January number of the Miami Student contains excellent cuts of several of these rare and beautiful books.

MURRAY SHEEHAN, '08.